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UPSTAIRS

The Man From Home

A Novelization of the Play of the Same Name

By **BOOTH TARKINGTON** and **HARRY LEON WILSON**

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(Continued.)

"I really can't say," replied Horace apologetically. "Never saw him that I know of. You see, we've been on this side so many years, and there's been no occasion for this fellow to look us up, but he's never opposed anything Ethel wrote for. He seems to be an easy-going old chap."

"Hum!"—he cast doubtfully. "Would he come to your sister's marriage—the matter of a settlement?"

Horace laughed cheerfully. "I have no doubt of it. If he has the slightest sense of duty toward my sister he'll be the first to welcome the alliance, won't he?"

"Then when he and my solicitor come they can have an evening together over a lot of musty papers, and the thing will be done. Again, my boy, I welcome you to our family. God bless you!"

He wrung Horace's hand again and turned away as if to hide his emotion, but really to wink at the countess.

"I'm overpowered, you know—really overpowered, you know," stammered Horace, fanning himself desperately with his hat.

"Come, Almeric," said the earl, and as the youthful heir to his house arose languidly he sidled close to the countess and whispered in her ear:

"Let him know it's a hundred and fifty thousand."

Then he and Almeric went up the steps into the hotel, leaving Horace and the countess gazing at each other delightedly.

She crossed over to him impulsively and, taking both his hands again, said:

"My friend, I am happy for you."

"Thank of it!" said Horace joyously.

"In a fortnight at the most dear old Ethel will be the Hon. Mrs. St. Aubyn, future Countess of Hawcastle!"

"Yes," replied the countess, withdrawing her hands and picking up her parasol, "and there is but the little arrangement of the settlement between your advocate and Lord Hawcastle's. But you Americans—you laugh at such things. You are big, so big, like your country!"

Horace followed her across the terrace to the wall.

"Ah, believe me, dear countess," he said, "the great world—your world, countess—has thoroughly alienated me."

The countess turned her shapely head and looked at him admiringly and with a touch of irony at the surprise she was about to give him.

"Ah, you retain one quality. You are careless, you are free," and she laid her right hand upon his arm, and Horace thrilled at the intimate touch.

"Well," he laughed, "perhaps in those things I am American, but in others I fancy I should be thought something else, shouldn't I?"

She laughed openly at him now, but earnestly withal, and said:

"You are a debonaire man of the world, and yet you are still American in that you are abominably rich. The settlement—such matter as that, over which a Frenchman, an Italian, might hesitate—you laugh. Such matter as \$150,000—you set it aside, you laugh. You say, 'Oh, yes; take it!'"

For a moment she feared that Horace would fall over the low parapet, so white did his face become and then so flushed, but the boy was game all through. The generations of simple Indiana stock came to his rescue, and he steeled himself with an effort and replied quietly:

"A hundred and fifty thousand pounds! Why, that's seven hundred and fifty thousand—I say, countess, she couldn't use the money to better advantage!"

There was real admiration in the Frenchwoman's glance this time, for she had lost none of the little byplay, and she admired the courage of the youngster. So she said:

"My friend, how wise you are!"

As she spoke she turned in time to see Ethel come down the steps of the hotel with a book beneath her arm and ran to her, clasping her in her arms and kissing her.

CHAPTER VII

STUBBED!

"LARGESSE, sweet Countess of Hawcastle!" the woman cried. "Largesse! And au revoir! Adieu! I leave you with your dear brother!"

She ran quickly up the steps with a flirt of her parasol, and Horace took his sister's hand with tears in his eyes.

"Dear old sis! Dear old pal!" he said, and she turned a radiant look upon him.

"Isn't it glorious, Hodge?" she said with exalted tone. "Look!" and held up the book she carried. "It's Burke's 'Peagee'. And Froissart's 'Chronicles'—I've been reading it all over again. The St. Aubyns were at Crecy and Agincourt, and St. Aubyn will be my name!"

"They want it to be your name soon, sis," he answered her.

For a moment she turned away and then looked at him straight in the eyes.

"You're fond of Almeric, aren't you, Hodge? You admire him, don't you, dear?"

"Certainly. Why, think of all he represents, sis!"

"Ah, yes, Hodge! Crusader's blood flows in his veins. It is the nobility that must be within him that I have plighted my troth to. I am ready to marry him when they wish!"

Horace sighed.



"I had him, you know, I rather think, didn't I?"

"It will be as soon as the settlement is made and arranged. It will take about all your share of the estate, sis, but it's worth it—a hundred and fifty thousand pounds."

Ethel lifted the book to the level of her eyes.

"What better use could be made of a fortune, Hodge, than to maintain the estate and high condition of so ancient a house?"

He looked at her affectionately and took her hand.

"It does seem impossible that we were born in Indiana, doesn't it, sister?" And the tones of his voice were those of incredulity.

She smiled at him fondly.

"But isn't it good that the pater made his pile, as the Americans say, and let us come over here while we were young to find the nobler things, Hodge—the nobler things?"

"The nobler things—the nobler things! Why, sis, when old Hawcastle dies I'll be saying offhand, you know, 'My sister, the Countess of Hawcastle'!"

For a moment Ethel remained thoughtful and then turned to her brother.

"You don't imagine that father's friend, this old Mr. Pike, will be—will be queer, do you?"

"Well, the governor himself was rather raw, you know. This is probably a harmless old chap, easy to handle."

"I wish I knew. I shouldn't like Almeric's family to think we had queer connections of any sort, and he might turn out to be quite shockingly American. I—I couldn't bear that, Hodge!"

There was a note of genuine pathos in her voice, and her brother responded instantly:

"Then keep him out of the way. That's simple enough," he said. "None of them, except the solicitor, need see him."

Almost in a burst like an eruption there came an uproar outside the gates beyond the hotel—wild laughter, riotous cheering and the notes of the tarantella played by mandolins and guitar, then more shouts and cheers and cries of "Bravo, Americano!" and "Yanks Dooda!" Horace ran to the gates, but they were closed, and the uproar continued. Ethel stood by one of the tables, amazement written on her features, and turned to her brother as he came back shaking his head.

"What is that?" she asked tremulously. Lady Creech, all in a flutter, entered from the hotel. At a glance one would set her down for an aristocrat.

There was no doubt of it. From the topmost tip of her white hair to the toe of her solid shoe she was an aristocrat.

"One of your fellow countrymen, my dear," she said to Ethel. "Your Americans are really too!"

"Not my Americans, Lady Creech!" said Ethel spiritedly.

"Not our, you know. One could hardly say that, now!" reiterated Horace.

Almeric entered, at once laughing and beating his boot with his crop. Almost exhausted with his mirth, he threw himself into a chair and burst out:

"Oh, I say, what a go! Motor car breaks down on the way here. One of the Johnnies, a German chap, discharges the chauffeur, and the other Johnny—one of your Yankee chaps,



"I AM MISS GRANGER-SIMPSON."

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